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## GORDON MORRIS ENDS 1984 - 2006 MACo CAREER WITH SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

In the history of any organization, the constant issue is "membership". In 1984, MACo was in the midst of major divisiveness. One of our major accomplishments is that we overcame this divisive period and solidified membership. When all the counties became members, the full compliment of counties and their officials strengthened our efforts and led to many major accomplishments.

I worked with more than 20 MACo presidents over these years. Women have come to play remarkable roles in the Association--Mona Nutting, Jane Jelinski, Ann Mary Dussault, Carol Brooker, just to name a few. Past President Toni Hagener served during the development of the MACo insurance pools. In 1984 there were nine women serving as commissioners; now there are 34. The image of Montana county commissioners today is much different because of these women.

The MACo insurance programs are one of MACo's biggest advantages for members. In the formative years, the whole country was struggling with insurance costs. The MACo program is now one of the strongest in the country.

Some hallmarks of leadership and the work we did for Montana county government took many years of effort during legislative sessions and coordinating with state departments. Under Vern Petersen's presidency, the state take-over of secondary roads eliminated a major financial burden from counties.

The incredible work done on the "Big Bill" with Gary Fjelstad was the culmination of years of legislative effort. It was a big step for local government as a whole. Those years of effort was also the impetus to establish state assumption of welfare and district courts, and the transfer of the public defender system to state administration.

We should have great pride in the strong legislative presence developed over these past years.

In the future I see significant implications from Generation X. Leadership from this age will need to be prepared for major decisions in personnel, staffing, salary ranges, etc.

When I started in MACo, we had a small office in a basement on 11th Avenue. Today we have our own building(s) and we have insurance claims process in-house. We should anticipate legal services moving from private sector to in-house staffing, too. Currently Jack Holstrom responds to a wide range of government questions, not only his assigned area of personnel. We need to

Continued on next page



Morris--1984



Morris--2004

address the need for legal staff to broaden our work for counties.

Working for county government has been a constant pleasure that included finding ways to respond to a variety of challenges. For example, our effort for training commissioners has grown from single workshops to training leading to certification--a big advance in commissioner expertise. In the 1980's, the only certification needed was to be elected.

The MACo staff is, as I view it, a family. The staff has been an incredible resource for local government. Over the past 20 years, this has consisted of people who kept counties' interests first and foremost in their work.


When I started as Executive Director, the Board at that time wanted a new administration. However, there was no way I could release Beverly Gibson from this staff. She was the person who helped me transition from county government administration to association administration.

As an anecdote--before the major changes in state law which came through the "Big Bill", there were only three people who understood county salaries. One has since retired (Beverly Gibson, long-time Assistant Director); one died (Don Dooley, Local Government Services of Department of Administration) and now I am retiring. Fortunately we have a much simplified form now.

I hope to begin a new phase of my government service through free-lance local government lobbying and consulting, with perhaps some adjunct professorship. These will allow me flexibility in my time so that I can stay active and begin more frequent travel.

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## IN APPRECIATION TO MACo AND MONTANA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

*from Connie Eissinger, McCone County  
WIR Past President*

I take this means to extend a huge thank you to MACo and all of you who have been so very supportive and encouraging during my time as President of the Western Interstate Region Board. It was a tremendous honor to represent Montana.

It occurred to me that some of the newer commissioners may not be aware of what WIR is and how it represents all of us, so what follows is a summary that I hope will help.

Each county in the fifteen western-most states, which belongs to NACo, belongs to the Western Interstate Region. All of Montana counties are members. There are up to two representatives appointed by each state to serve on the WIR Board, one representing a rural county and an option for one representing an urban county.

WIR has four meetings per year: the NACo Legislative Conference, the WIR Conference, the NACo Annual Conference, and then the Fall Board Meeting. This is WIR's 52<sup>nd</sup> year of existence.

Priorities are set at the Fall Board Meeting and they have stayed roughly the same for a number of years. PILT, the Forest Safety Net, RS 2477 Roads, the ESA, Healthy Forests and Rangeland, Roadless Areas/Wilderness, and Wildland Fires are primarily the issues we choose to spend the most time lobbying.

Next month I will address those issues which WIR works through on your behalf.



L - R: Connie Eissinger, WIR President, Montana  
Connie Conway, President, California Association of Counties  
Arnold Schwartznegger, Governor of California

**JUNE 30 CELEBRATION OF  
GORDON MORRIS' MACo CAREER  
EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENT SOON**

**If It Weren't For County  
Government . . .  
Old folks in Montana would be in a  
world of hurt.**

*By Linda Stoll*

Decades ago, the American public spoke loudly about recognizing the value of older Americans. The public made it clear that as a society - as a nation - we have an obligation to care for our older citizens. Congress responded with the passage of the Older Americans Act. The State of Montana expressed its support for these important family members by passing the Older Montanans Act several years later.

We have all benefited from this collective determination. With federal financial assistance, communities across the nation developed systems of services providing for meals, transportation, socialization, home health care and other programs designed to enable the highest possible independent and mobile quality of life for our oldest citizens. County government, through its participation in determining local services and its assistance in helping to provide local funding for federal matching dollars, has been critical in assuring the survival of these programs. State government, to a lesser extent, has also provided funding.

At the time the Older Americans Act was passed, Americans over the age of 65 comprised about 8% of the population. But our state is aging fast – faster than the national average – and our commitment to the values set forth in the Older Americans Act and the Older Montanans Act is being challenged by funding shortfalls. The percentage of Montanans over the age of 65 is already over 13% and, by the year 2020 is expected to be over 18% and by 2025, Montana will have the third highest percentage of elderly in the nation at just over 24%!

Not surprisingly, the past few years have seen changes in many of the communities' aging services programs. Meals programs have been

reduced and waiting lists for services are growing. Federal and state dollars have remained stagnant or in some cases have declined– but many counties have willingly increased local dollars to try to preserve programs. Increasingly, the need for more local funding to make up for shrinking state and federal resources is reflected in emergency county levies. But should rising property taxes be the answer to inadequate aging services funding?

Unless you think it's a good idea to continue to raise property taxes for aging services, county governments must take a more active and forceful role in helping to determine state and federal funding priorities. Counties need to be aggressive in pulling the state and federal government to the table to help plan for the inevitable – the rapidly increasing costs that will be associated with providing services to a growing, aging population.

Many Montanans may not know the name of their particular state representative or senator. Some may not even be able to name their congressman. But ask them the names of their county commissioners and more often than not, they'll be able to tell you. Many of us see and visit with our local government leaders on a much more frequent basis than is the case with state and federal elected officials. Local leaders are closest to the people and closest to the real issues that affect our communities. The leadership needed to help plan for the consequences of a rapidly aging population is likely going to come from our local leaders – our county commissions. Local citizenry will expect from and look to you for answers.

**Are you up to it?**

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## Gardiner – Park County Water Treatment Project

Gardiner - Park County Water Treatment Project successfully completed its package of funding for the total project construction cost of \$2,046,800. The funds come from a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loan for \$500,000, a Section 595 Bureau of Reclamation grant for \$825,000, a DNRC Renewable Resource Grant of \$100,000, a Treasure State Endowment Grant of \$500,000, and district funds of \$121,800.

The project will install an arsenic removal treatment plant for the water district's drinking water system. Currently, the test readings on arsenic in the water are between 21–28 parts per billion (ppb). According to the Environmental Protection Agency's new maximum contaminant levels, these levels should be at or below 10 ppb.

Ron Shorter, General Manager/Operator of the Gardiner-Park County Water District reports that roughly 5,000 feet of new 8-inch pipe and the building is about 75% complete. The plant should be operational by mid-June. The system will serve 800 residents of Gardiner (an unincorporated community) and thousands of visitors that go into Yellowstone National Park.

Anna Miller, financial advisor for DNRC's Conservation and Resource Development Division (CARDD), explained that during FY 2006, CARDD financed 34 projects for a total of \$42 million.

For more information regarding the CARDD or the State Revolving Fund Program, contact Anna Miller at (406) 444-6689.

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## HOME PROGRAM FUNDING RE-OPENED

The HOME Program did not receive a sufficient number of applications for eligible activities, therefore HOME will hold a second application round for the remaining \$483,917 in 2006 CHDO Set-Aside. The application deadline for the second round of funding is **August 1, 2006**. Applications must follow the 2006 HOME Guidelines, available website at [housing.mt.gov](http://housing.mt.gov).

From the original March 2006 applications, the Montana Department of Commerce has tentatively awarded funding to these county projects:

### **MEAGHER COUNTY**

#### **\$500,000 Award for \$1,325,150 Total Budget**

Meagher County sponsored a grant application on behalf of the Meagher County Senior Center for Phase 1 of Castle Mountain Apartments for units to serve low income seniors. The facility will have a total of 20 accessible senior apartments for independent living.

### **MISSOULA COUNTY**

#### **\$215,205 Awarded for \$909,980 Total Budget**

Missoula County sponsored an application on behalf of District XI Human Resource Council for a lease-purchase program that will target five low-income (61-80% of the area median income) American Indian families to purchase five homes at varied locations in Missoula County, outside city limits. The project is intended as a pilot, designed to establish an expandable model lease/purchase approach to homebuyer assistance which could be replicated in other areas of the state.

### **MINERAL COUNTY**

#### **\$250,910 Award for \$953,642 Total Budget**

Mineral County sponsored a grant application on behalf of District XI Human Resource Council (HRC) to assist in financing a manufactured home cooperative for six low-income families in St. Regis, an unincorporated community. The homes are to be owned by a nonprofit cooperative organization. Participants also will be eligible for homebuyer assistance loans through HRC.

## **SPOTLIGHT ON** **GALLATIN COUNTY**

### **County Spells Out Plans for Managing Growth**

*By Walt Williams, Bozeman Chronicle Staff*

Gallatin County Commissioners named managing growth their No. 1 priority for 2006. Their idea is to implement the Gallatin County Growth Policy using four tools:

Countywide zoning Roughly 650,000 acres of county land remain unzoned. Commissioners are debating zoning these areas for single-housing density only. "We're not talking about uses, setbacks and heights," Commissioner Joe Skinner said.

Transferable development rights (TDR) TDRs allow developers to purchase or acquire building rights from areas where communities want to save open space, and then transfer them to areas marked for high-density development so they can build more homes than zoning allows.

A rural land use center Modeled after a program in Larimer County, CO, this new county department would work with farmers and ranchers to draft development plans for their properties with a focus on preserving open space.

Neighborhood planning Communities across Gallatin County will be asked to draft plans spelling out how they want growth managed in their neighborhoods. These plans could form the basis for citizen-initiated zoning districts with tougher rules than allowed under countywide zoning.

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## **SPOTLIGHT ON** **FLATHEAD COUNTY**

### **Commissioners Put Roadless Lands on Ballot**

*By John Mueller, Bigfork Eagle*

The Flathead County Commissioners voted to place an advisory issue on the June 2006 primary election ballot to gain public input on the county's management recommendations of roadless forest lands.

The June primary will offer Flathead County voters two options to voice opinions on the roadless issue. The approved ballot resolution will read:

"At the present time there are 6.4 million acres of National Forest Lands managed as Roadless areas in Montana. Should that forest land 1) Be managed by the Forest Service for multiple use purposes including *motorized* recreation and roaded timber production, or 2) Be managed by the Forest Service for multiple use purposes including *non-motorized* recreation and roadless timber production?"

As part of a Bush administration directive, a county taskforce submitted its majority and minority recommendations to Gov. Brian Schweitzer on March 1. The majority recommended managing for multiple-use and moving away from blanket roadless area protections. The group, as well as commissioner Gary Hall who represented the county board of commissioners on the taskforce, decided that gaining public input through the ballot measure was necessary.

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# COUNTY COMPENSATION BOARDS

MCA 7-4-2503(4)(a) reads "The county compensation board shall hold hearings annually for the purpose of reviewing the compensation paid to county officers. The compensation board may consider the compensation paid to comparable officials in other Montana counties, other states, state government, federal government and private enterprise."

Population may be used in Compensation Board deliberations. Population information can be found at <http://ceic.commerce.state.mt.us/EstimatesCntyPop.html> and on page 4 of the May issue of MACo News.

The **cost-of-living** adjustment factor effective July 1, 2006, is **3.4%**.

The **mileage** reimbursement rate is **44.5¢ per mile** up to 1,000 miles. (MCA 2-18-503)

The **lodging** reimbursement rates include up to **\$60 + tax** depending on location. Details for locations are posted on the MACo website. The **meal** reimbursements are \$5 for morning, \$6 for mid-day, and \$12 for evening (total **\$23 per day**). (MOM 1-0340.25)

The recent survey for **base salary rates** for county clerk and recorders is on page 7 and is posted on the MACo website at

<http://maco.cog.mt.us>

MACo also has various salary publications available on the website.

## MACo INSURANCE TRUST BUILDING PROGRESS



Friday, May 5, 2006



Monday, May 8, 2006



Friday, May 12, 2006



Friday, May 19, 2006  
inside basement



Friday, May 26, 2006



Wednesday  
May 31, 2006


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**2005/06**  
**COUNTY CLERK AND RECORDER BASE SALARY BY CLASS**

**CLASS 1 A**

CASCADE COUNTY	48,129
FLATHEAD COUNTY	53,265
GALLATIN COUNTY	54,122
LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY	no response
MISSOULA COUNTY	52,104
RAVALLI COUNTY	no response
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY	53,112

**CLASS 1 B**

BIG HORN COUNTY	34,245
BLAINE COUNTY	35,596
BUTTE-SILVER BOW	39,956
FALLON COUNTY	37,305
HILL COUNTY	35,579
LAKE COUNTY	39,619
PHILLIPS COUNTY	30,126
RICHLAND COUNTY	38,654
ROOSEVELT COUNTY	35,020
ROSEBUD COUNTY	38,480

**CLASS 2**

CARBON COUNTY	38,945
DAWSON COUNTY	39,689
GLACIER COUNTY	33,987
LINCOLN COUNTY	36,049
MADISON COUNTY	no response
PARK COUNTY	40,919
SANDERS COUNTY	35,205
SHERIDAN COUNTY	33,575
STILLWATER COUNTY	36,643
TOOLE COUNTY	33,682
VALLEY COUNTY	31,641

**CLASS 3**

CHOUTEAU COUNTY	no response
FERGUS COUNTY (Charter)	32,653
JEFFERSON COUNTY	40,514
WIBAUX COUNTY	29,210

**CLASS 4**

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY	no response
CUSTER COUNTY	34,895
LIBERTY COUNTY	27,977
PONDERA COUNTY	33,848
SWEET GRASS COUNTY	30,810
TETON COUNTY	31,578

**CLASS 5**

ANACONDA-DEER LODGE	30,867
BROADWATER COUNTY	no response
CARTER COUNTY	28,660
GRANITE COUNTY	31,007
JUDITH BASIN COUNTY	30,653
MUSSELSHELL COUNTY	29,967
POWELL COUNTY	no response
WHEATLAND COUNTY	no response

**CLASS 6**

DANIELS COUNTY	no response
GARFIELD COUNTY	26,276
GOLDEN VALLEY COUNTY	21,081
Mc CONE COUNTY	29,626
MEAGHER COUNTY	25,398
MINERAL COUNTY	26,000
POWDER RIVER COUNTY	30,436
PRAIRIE COUNTY	25,447

**CLASS 7**

PETROLEUM COUNTY	27,826
TREASURE COUNTY	23,627

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# MACo DIRECTORY OF COUNTY OFFICIALS CORRECTIONS and ADDITIONS June 2006

## BIG HORN COUNTY

Email: [mhumphrey@co.bighorn.mt.us](mailto:mhumphrey@co.bighorn.mt.us)

## BUTTE-SILVER BOW COUNTY

Commissioner Wally Frasz  
[wfrasz@bresnan.net](mailto:wfrasz@bresnan.net)

## DAWSON COUNTY

School Superintendent Sandra Wells  
resigned.

## FALLON COUNTY

Delete Don Rieger email address

## GLACIER COUNTY

New Treasurer is Kate Salois  
Email: [gctreasurer@mt.gov](mailto:gctreasurer@mt.gov)

## LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

Clerk of Court Nancy Sweeney email  
[nsweeney@co.lewis-clark.mt.us](mailto:nsweeney@co.lewis-clark.mt.us)  
School Superintendent Marsha Davis  
phone number 447-8344

## MADISON COUNTY

Treasurer Shelly E. Burke

## MEAGHER COUNTY

Days in office are "first, second and third  
Tuesdays".

## ROSEBUD COUNTY

Sheriff Tim Fulton resigned.

## TETON COUNTY

Public Administrator  
Scott O. Swanson

## TREASURE COUNTY

Commissioner Mack Cole  
Email: [colemj@rangeweb.net](mailto:colemj@rangeweb.net)

## WHEATLAND COUNTY

Central phone number is 632-4891 with  
extensions:

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Clerk of Court	Extension 315
Justice of Peace	Extension 307
School Sup't	Extension 306
Treasurer	Extension 302

Other numbers remain as printed.

# COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*From Mike McGinley, Beaverhead County*

This was my first time at any NACO conference, so I found this to be very interesting, informative, and valuable. To meet personally with NACO staff to talk about the resources they provide proved to me the importance and necessity of our national organization.

The Economic Development Steering Committee's proposed resolutions are:

1. Supporting the restoration of CDBG.
2. Opposing the "Strengthening Americans Community Initiative" (SACI).
3. 2007 Appropriations for HUD.
4. Supporting RC&D Councils – (part of SACI).

One meeting of interest was with Harold Blattie, Bob Brooks, Paul Grove, Lobbyist for INEAS (Inland Northwest Economic Adjustment Strategy), and myself. INEAS is a project that has been trying to get off the ground for the last three or four years and support is needed for this project. Our contacts in Montana are Andy Poole with the Department of Commerce and Matt Jones, Senator Baucus' Economic Development Specialist in Missoula. This project tries to regionalize the economies of four northwestern states. The concept is great, but funding a new project during this period of budget struggles at the federal level may be the deciding factor. We will have to decide the priorities of funding efforts – old proven programs vs. new ideas.

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# HUMAN SERVICE AND EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE and NACo BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## 2006 LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

*By Douglas Kaercher, MACo President, Hill County*

I was very pleased with the work that we were able to accomplish at this year's NACo Legislative Conference in all the steering committees. Maybe it was just me, but for the first time since I have attended the Human Service and Education Committee, all the members were working toward a solution instead of just defending their stance or individual county views. I believe this to be a result of the President's budget and cuts proposed in this area, which forced us to band together, or maybe everyone was just stunned.

We had three resolutions that were passed by the NACo Board of Directors: 1) A resolution to give states and counties the utmost flexibility in the types of activities that count toward work and the individuals who must be included in the participation rates under the TANF Block Grant; 2) A resolution which supports transitional services for children aging out of foster care; and 3) A compromise resolution "Enacting Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation."

We discussed and confirmed resolutions referred from the Health Steering Committee on Medicare Part D-Prescription Drug Coverage and the Elimination of the Medicaid Rehabilitation Option for Children & Youth in residential care.

Other topics of discussion were the Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, The Effects of Methamphetamine on Health and Human Services, a briefing on the Forest Counties Schools Legislation and several reports from affiliate organizations.

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# W. I. R. BOARD and PUBLIC LANDS

*By Mike Murray, Lewis & Clark County*

Amelia Jenkins of the Western Governors' Association invited commissioners to become more active in that association. We also heard reports on 1) counties, reservations and the Dept. of Interior on working together; 2) sage grouse regional strategy (Concern was that some states like Montana still allow a fall sage grouse hunting season.); 3) the first National Advisory Committee on Roadless Areas; 4) wild land fires, with all air assets for fighting wildfires to be controlled and dispatched through the Boise Fire Center.

Dan Domenico, Special Assistant to the Solicitor, Department of Interior, told us he was stationed for a time in Billings with BLM. He conceived the idea of selling public lands to pay for the School Roads Coalition reauthorization.

In a closed meeting concerning the Western Counties Alliance, leadership decided to meet with Mark Walsh to attempt to resolve issues.

I attended meetings for Federal Land Payments Subcommittee, Federal Land Management Subcommittee, and Gateway Communities Subcommittee. For the full Public Lands Steering Committee, Commissioner Alan Thompson captured the total meeting in his report. Great job, Alan.

The breakfast meeting with our congressional delegation staff came in three separate waves. We had time for discussion of issues with each. I recommended we do this the same way again.

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Sheryl Wood, Associate Director

Karen Houston, Meeting Planner

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3. Joan Stahl, Rosebud County
4. Art Kleinjan, Blaine County
5. Arnold Gettel, Teton County
6. Carl Seilstad, Fergus County
7. Maureen Davey, Stillwater County
8. Ed Tinsley, Lewis and Clark County
9. Bernie Lucas, Meagher County
10. Paddy Trusler, Lake County
11. Bill Carey, Missoula County
12. David Schulz, Madison County

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Joseph Christiaens, Pondera County  
Representing County Coroners

Gary Olsen, Broadwater County  
Justice of the Peace

Karla Christensen, Garfield County  
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Great West Engineering, Inc., Helena

Life Care Services, Missoula

Montana Co. Road Supervisors (MACRS)

Montana Contractors Association, Helena

Montana Dakota Utilities

Montana Job Training Partnership, Helena

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MSU Extension Service, Bozeman

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